

USAR_J-06_Miyashita

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I was born on May 25, 1918. My name is Hachiro Miyashita.

05:18:24:15

Oita? In 1941, well, on Akagi, from Kagoshima, to Tomitaka, Saeki, and Usa, and there were some route to move a base from a place to another. It was before the war, so I think it was some kind of transferring a base.

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The aviators were always trained to fire bombs. We just moved from one base to another. We never had any idea that a war would happen. We thought we were just doing our trainings. It was our routine. The aircrafts flew for a training, like at dawn, at daytime, and at night. Though it was not like that they kept flying all day without a break. So we didn't suspect that something would happen. We never thought that. We kept training ourselves to get more skilled as a mechanics. Sometimes the airplanes went wrong. Even though it looked fine for now, we found a strange noise from a propeller.

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Well, it was not like they broke down, but there were minor malfunctions. The most frequent fault happened with a ignition plug. It often got dirty by gasoline. If it got dirty, it wouldn't work. We had to(?) We removed it from(?) but it was covered by(?) We needed to climb up the ladder, and rode on a airplane to exchange it with a new one.

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We used the Type 99 carrier bombers for the flight training. The Type 99 carrier bombers were dive bombers. Without the trainings, you couldn't start diving at the 3000 meter height nor lift your plane up at the 500 meter height. During the action, you needed to release a bomb. It was very hard to hit a target. That's why we needed the trainings. At the training, we used fake bombs. When we did the training, some airplanes hit the ground and the pilots died, if you didn't lift your plane up at the right time. If it was too dangerous to do on land, we did on the sea. Likewise, some pilots couldn't lift their planes up at the right timing, and they hit on the surface of the sea. I went to look for bodies when it happened.

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It was not like I didn't have anything else to do. We just buried the dead reverently. They were kind of sacrificed. So each unit performed a funeral service for them.

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Whoever was there went to look for the bodies. Sometimes we asked the city for some help, and borrowed a ship from it.

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It was a tragic death. I felt sorry for them. We had young aviators. And those people who dived on land or sea were usually young pilots. The experienced pilots didn't fail.

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We heard about the mission, after we left Hitokappu Bay on Etorofu Island. Everybody was gathered on the deck, and the captain told us about the attack. Before that, I thought we would just go to a northern sea to keep guard. When we left Oita, I thought we would go to stand guard at the northern sea. When we arrived at Hitokappu Bay, I found the other carriers gathering there. I thought there must be something significant. I didn't think it would be a drill. In the morning of the 26th, when we were about to leave, the captain told us to leave for the U.S. to fight against it. The date of the attack was called a X-day, and we would not send any telegrams, so we would be on a secret voyage. I thought we would finally fight against the U.S.

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We were mechanics. Without us, any aircrafts could fly.

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Yes. It was a secret to make a voyage to Hawaii. I didn't know anything about it.

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Since it was a secret sailing, our action should not be detected by anybody. So everybody on the ship, from mechanics to pilots, was forbidden to say anything about it. Anyway, while on the ship, we could not get in touch with anyone outside.

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Our duty as a mechanic was to maintain aircrafts. Every day we checked the engine, maintained the bodies of the planes, oiled the

machines, and cleaned them up. Whether they flew or not, we kept them maintained well. In a hangar, we couldn't start the engine. We couldn't turn it on. We had to take a plane up to the flight deck. But we couldn't. Without taking it to the flight deck, we had to keep it maintained. We had to make good use of our experience. No matter what part it was, we took care of the planes very carefully. If we had enough experience, we would feel sure that we were doing good jobs.

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When the planes were on the flight deck, we could start the engine. But we couldn't at the hangar. We couldn't tell what was wrong with a plane until we started the engine. We just made good use of our experience, and did our job. Our experience. We needed to start the engine on the flight deck to make sure what was wrong, but we were not allowed to do so.

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We were ordered to check the aircrafts. That was all. I didn't have anything else to do.

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When the aircrafts were ready for the attack after the maintenance at the hangar, we took them up to the flight deck, and then started the engine to make sure if it was fine. If it was fine, our duty was completed. Then, the superior office ordered the pilots to take off. After all planes took off without any troubles, all we did was just waiting at the safe place, because the enemy might attack us.

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On the ship, we used the Japan Standard Time, not the U.S. Time. As I recall, we woke up around two o'clock in the afternoon on the 6th (JST), and started working. It was not the 7th, but the 6th. We had a time difference. As I recall, we started working around the afternoon of the 6th on the Japan Standard Time.

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There was difference in time. I'm not sure. Even though I looked around, all I could see was just the ocean. Two o'clock in the afternoon is during the day, but we used the Japan Standard Time, so it was still the early morning, before the dawn. We prepared for the attack at midnight. Considering that, when we arrived at Hawaii, it was in the morning of the 7th. Before that, we had already started working. We

even used the Japan Standard Time, so we woke up at the time when we usually slept.

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After we woke up, we had a lot of things to do. We had three or four hours till the attack.

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I don't remember what I ate at the breakfast. We ate after all planes take off.

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I didn't feel tired. I worked enthusiastically. You might be suffering from jet lag, when you are on a trip or for pleasure. But we were under a lot of pressure, and we didn't have time to be suffering from jet lag. We were at a war.

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After I woke up, I washed my face. Then, I went to the hangar and check the planes, because they would take off soon. The superior office ordered the pilots to take off. Without the order, they couldn't take off. We had to move the airplanes at the small hangar. Besides, when the ship was rolling, sometimes we could accidentally hit a plane against the wall, and we could damage it. So we had to be careful all the time. We used a lift to take the planes up to the flight deck. Up on the flight deck, the wind was blowing. Then, we placed them on the flight deck. It took a while to do so, because we had to place them tightly on the flight deck. At a training, we used to place and put the airplanes back as quickly as we could with the carrier Zuikaku. Then, we were at a war. So if we damaged the planes, they couldn't fly. I had some men under me, so I encouraged them to work harder.

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The pilots didn't show up till we finished placing the planes on the flight deck, testing them, and preparing for the flight. When the pilots got on the planes, we helped them tighten their belt. We encouraged them to do a good job, patting them on the shoulder. There were some superior officers among the pilots, so younger maintenance men couldn't do it.

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They wore a headband over their flight cap. We, maintenance men, didn't wear any headbands. We just saw them off, waving our hands.

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The maintenance men didn't wear any headbands. We didn't even have one, because when we left Japan, we didn't even know we would go to war against the U.S. Later on, some people got the national flags,, but at the attack, we didn't have any.

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We cleaned up after all the planes took off. But we didn't have that much to do, after they took off. We just cleaned up. Then, we took some rest, until they returned. We just wished their success.

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I thought they would succeed.

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I didn't even think that they might get injured. I thought they could die. They wouldn't be afraid to get hurt. It was inevitable.

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We were afraid that the U.S. planes might come to attack us. We were afraid of their counterattack. They couldn't tell where our ships were, because we wound our way, and the planes also didn't come back straight to the ships. We expected their counterattack, but we didn't.

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We took some rest inside the ship. We didn't see the outside. So I'm not sure. We were not on a steamship, but on the carrier. So we didn't see the outside. All we did was just follow the orders.

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When the pilot landed his airplane, one maintenance man went up there and helped him loosen his belt. Then, when the pilot got off the plane, his eyes were bloodshot. While on the flight, he overtaxed his eyes. So his eyes were different. After the attack, their eyes were bloodshot, and also his face became a bit red.

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He focused all nerves on his eyes. I think that was why his eyes were bloodshot. All the pilots were tense.

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The pilots didn't look excited. They were rather calm.

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Even though they returned from the dive bombing, they were still calm. That was because of the result of their trainings.

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After the pilots got off the planes, they went back to their room... Oh, about me?

We had to house the airplanes. We moved them, following commands, and used the lift to take them down to the hangar. It took some time to finish. In those days, we didn't have microphones, so we had to use our own voice or a megaphone. Everybody got husky voices, because we had to use our own voice. We didn't have any microphone at that time. So after we housed one plane, we got a husky voice. After we housed all 29 planes, we almost lost our voice.

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We had some stuff to do. After we finished maintenance work, we could take some rest. But we had to work together, so we couldn't take a break at any time we wanted. We could be relieved after we finished our work and went back to our room. We were tense during working.

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The reason why I joined the Navy? I loved airplanes. There was a Junior Flight School. When you became 16 years old, you were qualified to apply to the school. So I went to a prep school, which prepared us to pass exams at a military academy or a naval academy. I was not smart enough. So I failed the exams. It was hard to pass tests of the aptitude as a pilot. Even though you passed exams in academic subjects, you would fail unless you pass the tests of the aptitude. I still wanted to join the Navy, so I just joined the new recruits' training course in the Navy. The reason why I joined the Navy was not like it looked better than the Army. When my father took me to see his acquaintance in the battleship Nagato, he gave us sodas and sweets. He showed us around the ship, and I was impressed how organized the battleship was and how efficiently people worked there. So I liked the Navy.

05:58:01:06

It was a long time ago. I am a southpaw. I played a southpaw pitcher. There weren't so many southpaws, so I had some chances to play at games. Baseball was just for fun, or for exercise. It was more important to study. So I studied harder than playing baseball. I just played baseball as an exercise. So I was not as good as professional players.

05:59:22:18

I didn't know any American baseball players. Baseball was not as popular in Japan as it is now. I didn't know any professional players. I'm not sure if we had any tournaments at that time, such as a city tournament. I don't remember.

06:00:03:18

Did we have a name? I don't think we named our team. We were just a school team. I don't remember. What was the name?

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I was in the fifth grade. I think I was either in the fourth or fifth grade.

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I don't remember who came from the U.S. What was his name? There was one famous pitcher. I don't remember.

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It was in a reclaimed land in Tsukisima, which is now called Harumi. At that time, it just turned into a reclaimed land. So there was nothing. We just put up a net and played baseball there. It was pretty crude back then.

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I think I was in the sixth grade at that time. In the sixth grade or seventh, I guess.

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One of the American players, though I don't remember his name, came to the ground. I think he played a pitcher. Then, he gave us a bundle of notes casually. I remember that well. I thought Americans were so generous. I think he gave it to us as(?) All we knew about the American players was Babe Ruth. Baseball was not as popular as it is now.

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At the February 26 Incident, I was on the battleship Yamashiro. It was the flagship of the Combined Fleet. Sankichi(?) Takahashi was also on Yamashiro. After the vacation at Beppu, we went to a port in Shikoku Island. We left Beppu in the evening, and then we entered the port in Shikoku. As soon as we entered the port in the morning, a trumpet blew. I thought that it was strange, and that what was going on, because we just arrived. In the Navy, we always followed the signal of a

trumpet. Then, we were ordered to gather on the deck. The captain told us, "This morning there was a revolt by young officers of the army in Tokyo. We are going to suppress this uprising." That was why we left the port right suddenly. Usually the ships of the Combined Fleet, such as battleships and cruisers, traveled in a single file line. But at that time, each ship was going side by side and going at full speed. Usually it took two full days and nights from Kyusyu to Yokosuka. But at that time, we arrived in one full day and night, and we entered Shibaura. Before we arrived at Shibaura, we formed a land fighting group and did machine gun and small arms training on the deck, though we usually didn't carry any guns on the ship. There was a naval guard school at the operation unit in Katsugibashi. We set up our head off there, and we patrolled in Ginza, Kyobashi, Nihonbashi, Hibiya, and Shinbashi. We formed some groups made up of 6 or 7 people, and we patrolled, carrying a gun. We thought that civilians must be very anxious, since the military officers rose in revolt. To show them that we were here, we patrolled in the cities. We hoisted advertising balloons to send the rebel army a message, saying to surrender. After we brought it under control, we got back on Yamashiro and went back to Yokosuka. We patrolled in Tokyo for about ten days. When we went to Yokosuka, we got a vacation. We got ten-day vacation, so I went back home in Tokyo. When I was back home, everybody welcomed me. At that time, the Navy was very popular.

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I had never thought that we would fight against the U.S. Before the war, I went to China. In 1940, I was in China, and we used Type 96 land-attack airplane and bombed on Chongqing. After that, I went back to Kisarazu. Three or four months later, I was assigned to Akagi. Then, we started working on Type 99 carrier bombers.

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Before I was transferred to Kyusyu, I was in Kisarazu. There was a flight unit in Kisarazu, not in Saga (?). After I finished the trainings, I was transferred to the operation unit, and I worked as a mechanic.

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I had never thought about the Americans. I didn't know them well. I had little understanding of the United States at that time. I was a bit more familiar with the U.K.

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After the attack on Pearl Harbor, we went to Rabaul to drop bombs. I think it was March. Next, Colombo on Ceylon Island. There was another naval port, but I don't remember the name. We bombed on it. We fired on the British domain. Ceylon Island was the British domain at that time. We were confronted with the U.S. on the East, so we tried to expand our territory toward the west. We had already declared war to the U.K. So we bombed and put HMS Hermes under water by Type 99 carrier bombers. Almost all bombs hit the ship, and we sent it to the bottom. After the attack on Ceylon Island and the bombings on the Indian Ocean, I entered ____ (?). Next day was April 18th, when we had Doolittle Raid in Tokyo. Our carrier, Shokaku, left for the southern sea to look for the enemy, but we couldn't find any. Then, we went back to Yokosuka. Next was the Battle of Coral Sea. We went there to support the military land on Port Moresby. After that, we had the actual fight with the U.S. carriers for the first time. Then, Shokaku got hit by three bombs, not on the flight deck, but on the rear part of the ship. We got hit by a type of bombs, which tried to kill people, not to damage ships. The bombs hit the rear part of the ship, but we were fine. We just couldn't launch the aircrafts anymore, because fires broke out. So we went back to Kure, and fixed the ship. After the repair, we went to the Eastern Solomons. It was August..., I don't remember the date. I was on Shokaku. When you look at the record of Shokaku, you can tell when. It was August 24th. There were so many. I need to organize them. The Battle of the Eastern Solomons, and then, the Battle of Santa Cruz. During the Battle of Santa Cruz, we were hit by four bombs on the rear part of the flight deck. After that, we went back to Yokosuka. The ship was repaired there. I think it was 1943. I don't remember which month. After that, we didn't have any operations for a while. So we went to ____ (?), and we had the trainings. I went to so many battles, so I'm confused. After we got hit at the Battle of Santa Cruz, then...

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We went to Mariana Island after the Battle of Santa Cruz. In February 1944, the 601 Kokutai was formed at Kanoya Air Base. Then, we went to Singapore. There were air bases in Sembawang, Seletar, and Tanga in Singapore. We had training there. While we were doing trainings, we heard the news that the U.S. had started to capture Saipan. So we got on the carrier. The 601 Kokutai had belonged to the carrier Shokaku, but at that time, it belonged to Zuikaku. I was on board Zuikaku, and stood by at Tawi Tawi. We waited till the time was ripe. Then, when the U.S. task force took an action, we responded. Our commander was Vice Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa.

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The land-based operations and the suicide attacks (Tokko) started later. The carriers Taiho and Shokaku were sunk by torpedoes off the Mariana Island. We lost the carriers which could give us a way to increase operational flexibility, so we couldn't make formations anymore. Then, we went back to Matsuyama. To prepare for an attack on Iwo Jima, we formed the new carrier bombers unit. Then, we went to Katori Air Base, and we started a Tokko operation for the attack on Iwo Jima. It was the beginning of Tokko operation. After that, we moved to Hyakurigahara Air Base. Katori Air Base was too close to the ocean, so it could be an easy target for the U.S. fighters. That was why we moved to Hyakurigahara. We were ordered an Okinawa operation, and we moved to Kokubu Air Base, which was reclaimed from the beach. Tokko operations were conducted there. At Kokubu Air Base, we lost a lot of aircraft and men, so we retreated to Hyakurigahara Air Base again.

06:21:48:17

My house in Tokyo was burned down by an air raid on May 24, 1945. On that day, I was at Hyakurigahara Air Base. So I asked my superior officer and took a vacation. The Jyoban Line was not working, so I took a subway and went to Kyobashi. Then, when I went up to the ground, I saw the city of Ginza totally destroyed by fire. I didn't have my house anymore. But I had some relatives and sisters in Tokyo. So I decided to visit my oldest sister's house.

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My house was burned down by an air raid on May 24.

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Ginza and Shinbashi were totally destroyed by fire. Before that, at the air raid on March, the area from ____(?) to the other side of Sumida River was burned down. But this time, the center of Tokyo was destroyed, so it was a deathblow. The public transportation didn't work. When I found my brother's house, I was relieved. Then, I rode on a bicycle, and I went to check up on my relatives.

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My friends' houses were also burned down. As long as we were at a war, there was nothing that we could do.

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Anyway, I thought we needed to focus on rehabilitation. Everything was destroyed and everybody was wounded. Nobody had time to care about

the others. At that time, I was still in Ibaragi Prefecture, and I was at the base. So I didn't have time to think about that. Then, we conducted Tokko operations until the last day of the war. We launched 12 airplanes at 10 o'clock on August 15. Then, the U.S. task force attacked the cities along the Pacific Ocean, from Kamaishi to Shizuoka. The U.S. battleships fired at them. Our unit launched the second Mitate-tai. They didn't conduct suicide attacks, but they were expected to return. They were Suisei carrier bombers, and they were great aircrafts at the time. They took off for an attack without an escort of the fighters.

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It was so pathetic. The Tokko operation. It was like they took off to die. I saw them off with a heartrending sorrow. The Tokko operation was a tragic duty, because there was no guarantee that they would return alive. Especially, when I saw my friends off, I felt more painful.

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They were great planes, and the best. It was too good to crash into the targets. So they were told to return after they hit the targets. They were filled up. I heard that even the training planes were launched for the Tokko operation in Okinawa. But our planes were the best, so we couldn't waste them. Strictly speaking, it doesn't sound right to say this as the "Tokko" operation, because they were told to return after they hit the targets. Later, the operation was named "Tokko." By orders. I didn't know what the higher rank officers were thinking.

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They often made an emergency landing. In Kamaishi or somewhere. At the airport in the northeastern area of Japan. In Kagurasaki(?), too. They were told to come back even after the emergency landings. They left their planes there, because they couldn't fly anymore, and they came back to the base by train.

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We attacked Iwo Jima for the Tokko operation, and also the task force. We hit the U.S. carriers. Once we hit a carrier, it couldn't launch any airplanes anymore. It was the best tactics to attack the carriers. If they didn't succeed in hitting a carrier, some of them crashed into the targets, but the others made an emergency landing and then returned. At last, in Tottori, _____(?).

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At the end of the war, we still wanted to resist, but it was the order of the Emperor, so we laid down our arms. On the last day of the war, I was in Hyakurigahara. I was at the Air Base till the night. The blackout was lifted, so when I saw the lights at the hallway, I realized that we lost the war. Then I went back to a billet. We were afraid that we might be taken to Okinawa for forced labor.

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Twelve airplanes took off at 10 o'clock in the morning. Their target was a carrier in _____(?), to keep them from launching airplanes. After the twelve airplanes took off, we were supposed to launch another 35 planes for the general attack. But we were ordered to wait, because there was going to be an announcement by the Emperor. We listened to the announcement from an airplane's radio receiver, but because of a lot of noise, we were not able to hear it well. Then, we heard the part of it. An orderly hurried by bicycle, and said that the war was over. When we asked him, he told us that we lost. We were so disappointed. We couldn't stop crying. We didn't have lunch yet, because we were supposed to launch the airplanes at noon. We had rice balls, and we were going to eat them after the airplanes took off, but we didn't have time. Then, the war was over and we lost. Now we were too distraught to eat lunch. We were standing by at the airport till the evening. When I saw the lights at houses around the base after the blackout was lifted, I thought there was nothing to do and I returned to a billet. After that, I was clearing up the remaining. We lost the war. We were defeated by the U.S.

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It was hard to answer, but I felt the power of the U.S. It kept manufacturing carriers and airplanes one after another, and then, I thought there was no way we could win against the U.S. We saw what a great power the U.S. had. While we were losing ships, they were manufacturing carriers and planes one after another. The U.S. had so many resources, but we didn't, so we couldn't last longer.

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Even during the war, I thought we might lose.

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I thought so when the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Then, they did on Nagasaki. After those incidents, I didn't think we would win. At the time, I was not a POW yet, but I was afraid that I might be taken to do forced labor.

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The U.S. had so many resources that it manufactured carriers one after another. Our spy told us so. Since we didn't have any resources in our country, we tried to expand the territory toward the Southeastern Asia. But we couldn't do it, because we were surrounded by the enemies. So I thought that the prospects of our country was uncertain. I thought we should work harder, and we needed to hang in there.

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It was a surprise attack. So I didn't think it was fair and square.

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We, soldiers, just carried out the orders. We didn't do so, based on our own idea and opinions. During the wartime, there was no help for it. Thinking back to those old days, I think that a war is cruel and we shouldn't fight against each other.

06:42:49:14

I'd like to express my regret over the death of fallen soldiers, and to offer my condolences to their family. I believe that we should never fight against each other. If we can first talk and come to an agreement, it will be great. I am totally against using any force to solve any problems. I'd like to pray for the repose of the souls of the deceased.